

Tale *Feathers*

August 2002

Volume 69

Number 6

Tylka's Book on Native Landscaping Now Available

Jim Holsen

David Tylka, member and former president of the St. Louis Audubon Society, has written a new book on "Native Landscaping for Wildlife and People," published by the Missouri Department of Conservation and available (\$18) from the Department's Powder Valley Nature Center in Kirkwood or from the Department itself. The title highlights Dave's interest in people as well as wildlife. Dave is a professor of biology on the Meramec Campus of the St. Louis Community College, where he teaches ecology and field courses in zoology and botany. Dave also serves on the Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society.

Subtitled, "How to Use Native Midwestern Plants to Beautify Your Property and Benefit Wildlife," Dave emphasizes plants native to Missouri. Throughout, the book is lavishly illustrated by Jim Rathert of the Missouri Department of Conservation and others.

Dave credits his wife, Karen, for helping to edit the book. Karen, who also teaches at the Meramec campus, was for many years the editor of this newsletter.



This book makes a beautiful gift for anyone interested in attracting wildlife. A very small plot can be as exciting as a much larger "landscape." The secret: native wildlife need native plants, and this is where one can learn how to do it right.

INSIDE

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St. Louis Audubon Society

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are needed for the next newsletter mailing part to be held at Wild Bird Center in Creve Coeur, **Aug. 23**. The address is 12792 Olive Blvd. The phone number is 314-439-9453. We will meet at 7:30 p.m. Call the store or Anne Bolte (314-832-0938) for directions

Volunteers are need for Operation Clean Stream on **Aug. 24, 2002**. For more information, contact Jerry Castillon at 636-391-7586

MEMBER NEWS

This month continues our series of profiles of St Louis Audubon members.

John Solodar was first elected to the board April XXXX.

How would you describe your educational background?

BA - Swarthmore College - 1962 majored in Chemistry; M S - Yale University - 1963 in Chemistry; PhD. - Yale University - 1967 in Organic Chemistry; Post-doctoral fellowship - MIT 1967-68

How would you describe your current occupation?

Retired from Monsanto. Spent entire career in research involving Organic Chemistry.

What is your current function/role with SLAS?

Liaison to Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area (REDA) for Least Tern Habitat Restoration and coordinator of plan to buy the Abney inholding at REDA on Orton Road.

What is your #1 conservation concern at any level, from local to global?

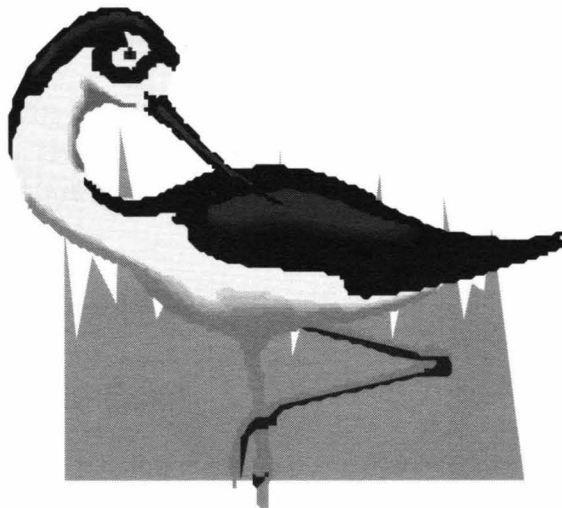
Habitat preservation/restoration for various species and/or entire ecosystems.

In what ways can NAS or SLAS address this concern?

Many government agencies that share our environmental concerns and goals can only receive funding for their projects if local organizations become involved as partners, either through volunteer work or with financial commitments. We can leverage small amounts of our money and volunteer time to enable these agencies to undertake projects that we alone could never handle.

What is your long-term vision/goals for SLAS?

To be a leader in the St. Louis area in identifying parcels of land that could serve as sanctuaries for threatened species or ecosystems and to be a lead coordinator in working with governmental agencies in preserving and maintaining these lands.



Conservation Report: Urban Bird Issues

- Sue Gustafson, VP Conservation

We had a team of nine hardy volunteers from St. Louis Audubon Society and Webster Groves Nature Study Society who participated in our project that assessed the issue of bird strikes/fatalities and downtown buildings during the peak of spring migration April 29 through May 13: Dianne Benjamin, Lynne Breakstone, Ken Cohen, Sue Gustafson, Mitch Leachman, Sherry McCowan, Karen Meyer, Linda Tossing, and Mike Thelen. As you are probably aware, most migratory birds use the stars to navigate by at night, and nights of low cloud cover in which the stars are obscured can result in birds flying towards other sources of light such as lit buildings. Bird strikes are a major problem in cities such as Chicago, New York, and Toronto, and those cities have implemented a Lights Out program to educate the public and building owners about this hazard to migratory birds. Our study's objective was to determine the extent of the problem here in downtown St. Louis. Special thanks to the team of volunteers who devoted a lot of time and legwork to this project!

Analysis of the data (birds found 5 - 7 a.m. at the bases of buildings over the two week period) resulted in a total of 27 fatalities comprising 11 species and 13 stunned/injured birds comprising 8 species. Based on the concentrations of locations where the birds were found, and our observation that only a small number of buildings are brightly lit up at night, it is thought that reflective glass in the lower story of buildings may be posing more of a hazard than lighted buildings. We are sharing this information with the Building Owners Management Association and the St. Louis Green Building Council to acquaint them with the issue.

This project is one component of my work as the St. Louis Urban Bird Conservation Treaty Coordinator, a position funded by U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) grants to St. Louis Audubon and Webster Groves Nature Study Society. My work will help USFWS assess the potential for establishing a bird conservation "treaty" with St. Louis which will entail providing federal funding for bird conservation activities in the areas of hazard reduction, habitat restoration, and education/outreach. My upcoming conservation reports will provide more details about the potential treaty program which will bring together area partners working towards the common goal of migratory bird conservation.

St. Louis Audubon Sets Up New Base Camp

Mary Dueren

In November 2000, our chapter moved out of 325 North Kirkwood Road when new landlords took over the building and raised the rent significantly. Before, during and after that time, our chapter searched for a suitable location. We sent all of belongings to storage while the search continued. This past winter, one of our board members and her husband suggested a location in the City of St. Louis. This was a building that was newly re-habbed and centrally located. At the April board meeting, our chapter took them up on the offer and moved into 3502 Utah in early May. We share space with artists in a beautifully restored building in the Tower Grove East area near St. Pius X Catholic Church.

We now have access to our educational resources that had been in storage. Although the space is not quite big enough for a full board meeting, it will work for committee meetings.

It is fitting that we use a "re-cycled" building for our chapter base camp. If you would like more information about our "camp", don't hesitate to call any board member or myself.

You are Invited to: A Wildlife and Birding Safari to South Africa

October 11-21, 2002

A wildlife safari is the most exciting adventure of a lifetime! Don't miss this one. Join us in "their" spring. We use expert local guides, a relaxed pace, and budget costs. All air fare from the United States is included in group rates.

Ken Newman is perhaps the best known South African bird guide and field guide artist/author. With Ken we visit three private game reserves : Mala Mala adjacent to Kruger National Park; Ndumo; and Hluhluwe. Each has different habitat to ensure the largest number of birds and mammals are found. Three internal flights are included to save travel time between game reserves.

Southern Africa has a bird list that exceeds 900 species and over 100 of these birds are endemic. Many of these endemic species are found in the Cape Town area. An optional four day extension is offered to experience this scenic Cape area. We explore along the coast to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, visit several major nature reserves including Cape Point NR and False Bay to Boulders Beach with its Penguin Colony and spend a full day at the huge West Coast NP. We also visit Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens including its many birds. Included are two pelagic boat trips to historic Robben Island and Duiker Island.

On our last trip we viewed over 320 species of birds and about 45 species of mammals including the Big Five up close and personal!

FOR ITINERARIES OR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

PAUL BAUER at 314-921-3972

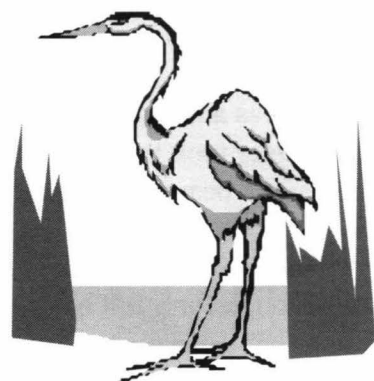
ALSO SEE OUR WEB SITE:

www.stlouisaudubon.org

Bird-n-Learn

Jim Malone

St. Louis Audubon Society has teamed up with the St. Louis County Parks Department to offer a series of three "Bird -n-Learn" nature walks in Creve Coeur Park. These walks will be centered around wetland education, demonstrating what a wetland is, what we can expect to see there, and why they are important to protect. Each Bird-n-Learn session will include a brief introductory lecture about wetlands and how they change throughout the year. Following this introduction, we will visit Little Creve Coeur Lake and see a living wetlands in action. These Bird-n-Learn sessions have been scheduled to demonstrate how wetlands differ in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. If you are interested in attending these walks, check the calendar for dates, and reserve a space by calling the St. Louis County Parks reservation line at (314) 615-4FUN. There will be a \$5 fee for each walk payable when you make your reservation, or you can just show-up at the event and pay there. Come on out and learn with us!



New Calendar - Good Birding

Jim Malone

This issue of Tale Feathers contains our 2002-2003 calendar of events, and we have some great walks planned. We will visit many of the familiar locations you have come to love, a couple of new ones, and some old favorites we haven't been to in awhile. Check out the entire calendar for a year's worth of events.

August 10 (Saturday) Shorebird Stroll, 7:30 AM. This first walk of the "Fall" birding season was very successful last year. For this outing, we will meet at Horseshoe Lake State Park, then move around in Missouri and Illinois looking for migrating shorebirds. We will likely visit Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge, and lots of wet spots along the way. This will be an all day event, so bring your lunch and something to drink. To get to the starting point, take I-70 across the Popular Street Bridge into Illinois. Stay on I-70 to the Highway 111 exit. Take highway 111 North (left) for about 2 miles to the entrance of Horseshoe Lake State Park. We will meet at the first parking lot on the right, inside the park.

September 8 (Sunday) Tower Grove Park, 7:30 AM. By this September date, the Fall passerine migration should be in full swing. We will be searching for Warblers, Thrushes, Cuckoos, Tanagers, and other migrants which might happen by. This is a great chance to look at some "Confusing Fall Warblers" and maybe even learn how to identify them. To participate in this walk, take Kingshighway South from I-64 or I-44 to Magnolia. Turn left at Magnolia and follow the North edge of the park to the stoplight. Turn right at the light, and right again on the first road inside the park. Follow this road to the Northwest corner of the park and we will meet at the Gady Bird Garden.

September 21 (Saturday) Carlyle Lake, 7:00 AM. This annual pilgrimage to Carlyle Lake is one of our most popular outings of the year. This year we will be limiting the number of people on the boat portion of the trip to 24, so make your reservations early. This trip contains all kinds of great habitats for the best birds of the season. We begin the day in the Hazlett State Park woods searching for passerines and raptors. From here, we load into Pontoon boats and search the lake for Sabine's Gulls, Jaegers, Red-necked Palaropes, and other waterbirds of the season. We will have our lunch on the lake, so remember to bring it and something to drink. After docking, we will drive to the North end of the lake to an area known as parking lot #3. This is usually a wonderful place for fall shorebirds, often filled with staggering variety and numbers. There will be a fee associated with this trip to cover the cost of the boats. Although the exact price has not been determined yet, previous trips have cost about \$25 per person. If you are interested in this trip, contact Jim Malone at stlaud@surf-best.net or by phone at (636)536-1119 to reserve a space.

These are only the first trips we have planned for the coming year. Look through the calendar and you will surely find something of interest. Come on out and join us!

Audubon Missouri State Office Update

The board of trustees met in May for the quarterly board meeting. The trustees had the opportunity to inspect the new office location. The move was necessary due to increasing rent and increasing staff needs. The new office location is:

2620 Forum Blvd Suite C-1

Columbia, MO 65203

Phone: 573-447-2249 or 573-447-2428

There was lots of good and interesting news for the state office. AM and MDC (Missouri Department of Conservation) announced that the state ornithologist position will be located in the AM office and will eventually be funded by Audubon Missouri. MDC also announced a significant grant of \$2 million dollars to the Joplin Audubon Center. Work still continues on the strategic plan. The goal is to have this project complete by November of this year. The next meeting of the trustees is set for August.

Chip mills: Can Missouri set an example for the nation?

Jim Holsen

In the early 1900's Missouri's forests were devastated as the giant sawmills, cutting ties for the railroads expanding into the West, pursued a "cut-out and get-out" policy -- when the trees were cut the sawmills closed down and moved on, leaving the land denuded and subject to erosion. An oak-hickory forest requires 70 to 80 years to recover from such destruction, so only now are we seeing those forests in a more normal state.

But in 1998 a new threat emerged -- the high capacity chip mills that have led to clearcutting and the loss of forests in our southeastern states were introduced into the Missouri Ozarks. Willamette Industries built a 300,000 ton/year mill at Mill Springs on the Black River and Canal Corporation has a similar mill at Scott City, near Cape Girardeau. The voracious demands of these mills for feedstock leads to industrialized forestry practices. Already approximately 1.2 million acres of forest are clearcut annually to satisfy some 150 chip mills in our southeastern states. Such lands are often converted to pasture or to pine plantations, monocultures lacking the biodiversity we associate with a mature forest.

In early 1998 the Missouri Audubon Council, representing the 14 Audubon societies in Missouri, voted to give its highest priority to legislation regulating chip mills. In April of that year, representatives of St. Louis Audubon, the Missouri Audubon Council, the Missouri Coalition for the Environment and the Sierra Club met with Brad Ketcher, Governor Carnahan's chief of staff, in the Governor's office to suggest that the Governor appoint an advisory committee to study the issue.

Later in the year, Governor Carnahan did just that, and the most important representative of environmental interests on that panel was Dave Bedan of the Columbia (Missouri) Audubon Society and the Missouri Audubon Council. Dave had earlier associations with the Missouri Coalition for the Environment and the Sierra Club, and he is now heading conservation efforts at Audubon Missouri, our state office for the National Audubon Society. Other members represented government agencies, the timber industry, state senators and representatives, private landowners, etc.

About 85 percent of the forest land in Missouri is in private hands and that is where the

solution to the problem of chip mills must lie. The Governor's Advisory Committee on Chip Mills submitted a report recommending incentives for private owners to apply so-called "best management practices," logging practices that help to control soil erosion and water pollution. In April of 2000, the Missouri Clean Water Commission issued a two year moratorium on new permits for chip mills, giving the Missouri Departments of Natural Resources and Conservation time to work out new regulations. That moratorium expired this past spring without much being accomplished.

However, this spring Joan Bray, state representative from University City, with two co-sponsors, introduced House Bill HB 2040, a bill requiring the Department of Natural Resources to establish a permitting process for mills that produce wood chips for industrial processes. (Representative Joan Bray received St. Louis Audubon's Legislator of the Year Award in 2000.) The House Environment and Energy Committee held a hearing, asked for additional information, and appointed a subcommittee to study the bill. While there was no further action in the session just ended, we can hope for a more favorable legislative atmosphere this coming January. The past year, with budget problems and the stadium bill, was not a good year for new legislation.

After the 1910's, after Missouri's forests had been ravaged, Missourians did a remarkable thing. Noticing that deer, turkey and other game were down to a relatively few individuals, in 1936, by a constitutional amendment, they established a non-partisan Conservation Commission, replacing the older political fish and game commission. And later, in 1976, they approved a 1/8th of one percent sales tax to support conservation. Until a year or so ago, when Arkansas joined Missouri, Missouri was the only state with an independent, non-political and largely self-supporting department of conservation that supports passive non-consumptive activities as well as fishing and hunting. We have been the envy of all other states and, indeed, of other nations around the world.

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Now Missouri has the opportunity to show the nation how to cope with this new threat to our forests. While chip mills are not yet firmly established in our state, we have an opportunity to control their destructiveness that other states do not have -- in states where they are firmly established with powerful political connections. With the Chip Mill Advisory Committee, the Clean Water Commission moratorium and, now, the chip mill regulatory bill, Missouri is clearly feeling its way through a difficult tangle of interests, private and public. Missouri has done it before, maybe we can again set an example for the nation. If we are to be successful, a lot of people must pitch in and help.



Finches and CONJUNCTIVITIS.

At Wild Bird Rehabilitation we often get telephone callers saying the following: "There's a little brown bird on my feeder and I think he's blind." The "little brown bird" is a female House Finch. They, along with the males, look blind because their eyes are swollen and often matted closed. What is wrong is an outbreak of conjunctivitis, or an infection of the area surrounding the eye, often including some sinus involvement. This is spread, apparently, through contact at feeders. It can be spread by direct contact or sneezing. **IT IS NOT CONTAGIOUS TO HUMANS.** This disease seems to have only affected House Finches, and possibly Purple Finches. A course of antibiotics halts the infection, and most birds treated will be ready for release after three weeks. So far WBR has only lost 2 finches who had secondary problems. Our recommendation to those of you who have feeders and baths is to keep them clean, using a 5% to 10% solution of bleach water daily. Some people keep a covered container of the solution handy and wipe down their feeders each time they are filled.

Tale Feathers

Tale Feathers is published monthly by the St. Louis Audubon Society. Messenger Printing prints 2500 copies of each newsletter on recycled paper using soy ink. Anne Bolte edits the newsletter.

St. Louis Audubon Society 2001 - 2002

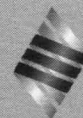
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Attention!

The deadline for the Sept. issue is
Aug 10. Send inquiries to Anne by
E-mail ambolte@swbell.net
phone 314.832.0938
post 6939 Sharp
St. Louis, MO 63116



EMERSON

Special Thanks!

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Audubon is a membership organization dedicated to protecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Our members are the source of our volunteer strength and the foundation of our financial support. By becoming a member, you will receive National Audubon Society's magazine as well as the St. Louis Audubon Society newsletter, *Tale Feathers*.

St. Louis Audubon Society Membership Form

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